



**PREPARING PRINCIPALS AND DEVELOPING
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATIONS
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

•• LESSONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD ••



Foreword

A question that preoccupies us at the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) is how to maximize the impact of school leaders. While there is growing awareness and research about the vital role principals play in creating successful schools, existing knowledge on the best ways for school leadership associations to support effective school leadership is sparse. What are the key assumptions about effective school leadership? What are the key issues and challenges facing school principals leading in diverse contexts (or in promoting excellence with equity)? What is the role of school leadership associations for maximizing the impact of school leaders? The answer of lead learner systems focused on student-centered leadership is simple, but multifaceted.

First, we know the difference the combination of management (operations) skills and instructional leadership can make to the quality of teaching and learning in a school and ultimately improve students' performance.

Second, we recognize the challenges facing school leaders and lead learning organizations with multiple stakeholders and connecting peers in a collaborative cycle of enquiry focused on success for all learners. In essence, instructional leadership is often promoted as a panacea for improving schools but it rarely lives up to its promise. Thus we, like many of the school leaders in our jurisdictions, feel pressured to frantically plug holes with ever decreasing resources and are left wondering at the end of the day what it means to go from 'effective enough' to learning leaders par excellence.

Finally, we know that although today's global 21st century society provides numerous opportunities for sharing learning and resources; there is still a critical need for shared understandings about effective leadership. Significant gaps remain in transforming school leadership at every school, such as equitable access to lack of funding, and we are challenged to ensure sustainable gains. Sustainable gains for school leadership associations may depend largely on transforming individual member strengths and knowledge into collective learning. The challenge for associations attempting to get smarter may be not only how to take collective advantage of individual member learning but also magnify capacities through collective associations' efficacy, and walking the talk as system networking learners.

The objective of the International Symposium held November 7 and 8, 2013, in Toronto, Canada was to initiate an informed dialogue among school leadership organizations from around the world facilitated by education thought leaders on the path of 21st century learning. We believe the core of preparing school systems for a changing world is based on the idea that effective principals are a prerequisite for effective schools. However, another foundational component may be the specific characteristics of highly effective school leadership associations that can fuel new research and knowledge of best practices, develop 21st century learner skills, and prepare tomorrow's school leaders.

The core agenda for the Symposium was initiated by the OPC, but learning was facilitated by two world renowned education thought leaders Dr. Avis Glaze, author of *Breaking Barriers, Excellence and Equity for All* (with Ruth Mattingley, 2012) and Dr. Lyn Sharratt, author *Putting Faces on the Data, What Great Leaders Do* (with Michael Fullan, 2012).

The International Symposium involved a number of school leadership associations for informing a global exchange and perspective. Participants included the following:

Australia

- Sheree Vertigan, President
Australian Secondary Principals' Association (ASPA)
- Norm Hart, President
Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA)
- Stephen Breen, President
Western Australia Primary Principals' Association (WAPPA)
- Rob Nairn, President
West Australian Secondary School Education Association (WAPPA)

British Columbia

- Shelley Green, President
British Columbia Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association
- Kit Krieger, Executive Director
British Columbia Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association

Canada

- Tina Estabrooks, President-Elect
Canadian Association of Principals
- Jameel Aziz, President
Canadian Association of Principals

Denmark

- Kenneth Thomassen, School Head of International Dimensions and Relationships & Educational Advisor, CEVEA (Denmark)

International

- Lisa Vincent, President
International Confederation of Principals
- Vicki Shannon, Americas ICP Representative
International Confederation of Principals

Ireland

- Sean Cottrell, National Director
Irish Primary Principals' Network
- Brendan McCabe, President
Irish Primary Principals' Network

Manitoba, Canada

- Spencer Clements, Chairperson
Manitoba Teachers' Society (& Council of School Leaders)

Ontario, Canada

- Andre Potvin, President
Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario
- Paul Lacalamita, Executive Director
Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario
- Wayne Joudrie, Deputy Executive Director
Public Council of Ontario Directors
- Ontario Principals' Council Representatives:
Bob Pratt, President
John Hamilton, President-Elect
Ken Arnott, Past President
Sue Ferguson, Vice-President
Brian Serafini, Vice-President
Mary Linton-Brady, Member at Large
Larry O'Malley, Member at Large
Frank Palumbo, Member at Large
Sandra Stewart, Member at Large
Ian McFarlane, Executive Director
Joanne Robinson, Director of Professional Learning

Quebec, Canada

- John Ryan, Coordinator
Leadership Committee for English Education in Quebec
- James McKinnon, Member
Leadership Committee for English Education in Quebec

Peru

- Mercedes Garcia de Valenzuela, Vice-President
ADECOPA
- Alfredo Draxl Garcia Rosell, Comite Gremial
ADECOPA

U.K.

- Bernadette Hunter, President
National Association of Head Teachers

International Discussions



Photo (Left to Right): Mercedes Garcia de Valenzuela, Vice-President, ADECOPA, Peru with Bob Pratt, President, Ontario Principals' Council and Bernadette Hunter, President, National Association of Head Teachers, U.K.

Photo: Alfredo Draxl Garcia Rosell, Comite Gremial, Peru listens to Sheree Vertigan, President, Australian Secondary Principals' Association



Photo (Left to Right): Shelley Green, President, British Columbia Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association, Brendan McCabe, President, Irish Primary Principals' Network, and Bob Pratt, President, Ontario Principals' Council

Executive Summary

Preparing Principals and Developing School Leadership Associations for the 21st Century

The purpose of the International Symposium for leaders of principal organizations was to dialogue, debate, and learn from each other to:

- interrogate key assumptions about leadership,
- identify the key issues and challenges facing school principals leading in diverse contexts (or in promoting excellence with equity), and
- brainstorm recommendations for maximizing the impact of school leaders and school leadership organizations.

The intent of activities was to reflect on collective realities (contexts) and define new possibilities for system support of leaders of learning. As a precursor to dialoguing about possibilities for school leadership associations, facilitators of learning Dr. Avis Glaze and Dr. Lyn Sharratt shared research and trends about effective school leadership, high performing systems, 21st century learning, and equity. Throughout the two days, participants reflected on both personal learning plans related to each organization's context and symposium consensus as they assessed the impact and alignment of system connections, and consulted with each other to identify solutions to challenges, resourcing, and maximizing the support of members to focus on student achievement.

As a result of this International Symposium, there was a clearer understanding of challenges and characteristics of a paradigm shift related to system realities and alignment. This white paper presents new approaches to system reform, breaking away from the management paradigm to help school leaders and system leaders know, mobilize, and sustain instructional leadership, and dramatically raise—and sustain—student-centered leadership.

Synthesizing input and the lessons learned by organizational leaders from around the world, this symposium focused on new approaches for associations developing system thinkers in action. The proposed vision and next steps establish the tipping point for moving toward personalized, instructional learning systems and global collaborative communities of inquiry to ensure continuous networks of learning and ongoing student improvement.



Dr. Avis Glaze, Learning Facilitator



Dr. Lyn Sharratt, Learning Facilitator

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The Challenge

Characteristics of Effective School and System Leadership

Principals matter in deep and profound ways. A new wave of research on educational leadership has confirmed that the quality of leadership practices in a school can make a significant difference to the learning and achievement of students. As Viviane Robinson states in her book *Student-Centered Leadership*, “in the higher-performing schools it is much more focused on the business of improving learning and teaching” (3). What we now know is that strategies for improving student achievement *must* include efforts to move principals from primarily managers to instructional leaders.

For instructional or student-centered leaders, the bottom line is always cycling back to the impact on the educational outcomes of students. The criterion for leadership effectiveness is to create the conditions that make this impact possible. Although the standards of instructional leadership can vary with cultural differences, lessons from around the world confirm that instructional leaders have common knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. As student-centered leadership is translated into school effectiveness and school leadership frameworks for shared understandings, leaders create the conditions required for teaching and learning by:

For details about capabilities and dimensions of student-centered leadership, see *Student-Centered Leadership* by Viviane Robinson.

- setting direction,
- building relationships and developing people,
- developing the organization to support desired practices,
- improving the instructional program, and
- securing accountability.

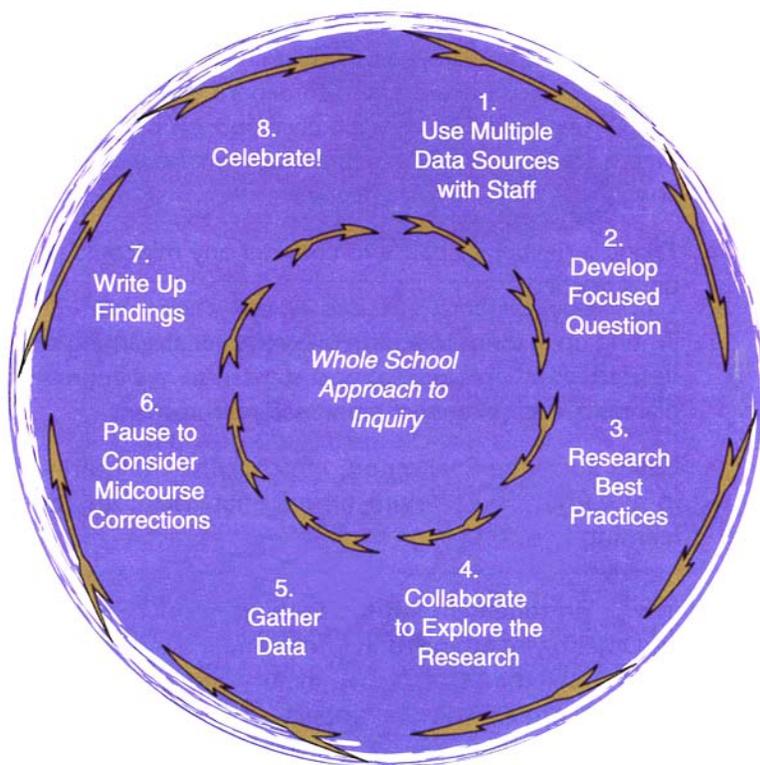
As our learning facilitator Dr. Avis Glaze presented research about effective school leadership, we were reminded that effective school leaders put students at the centre of a school system and:

- view education as the ultimate tool of empowerment
- have a laser-like focus on student achievement
- maintain a sense of urgency about improvement
- engage in ‘whole person’ education
- thrive on challenge
- use power effectively
- demonstrate personal qualities such as empathy
- know how to motivate, develop and inspire people
- include community outreach and engagement

For Fullan and Sharratt in *Putting Faces on the Data* (130-131), a whole system approach to inquiry involves educators questioning their practice, looking at purposeful collection and use of data, and reflecting on what’s working, what’s not working, and what could be done differently. This whole-system approach to inquiry focuses the work on data “resulting from deep, collective thought and conversations over a sustained period of time” (130).

The following graphic illustrates the components of the Collaborative Inquiry Cycle. One important question with respect to this inquiry cycle asks whether the processes of professional learning are fundamentally different from the processes for school leadership organizations providing system

support for developing instructional leadership. Clearly, the knowledge and skills for the learning context may be different, but the processes for learning new knowledge and skills may not be dissimilar.



1. Using multiple data sources related to school and student improvement with the whole staff.

2. Developing a focused question concerning school and classroom practice to increase student achievement.

3. Scouring the research literature to understand current best practice pertaining to the inquiry question – teachers often conduct a book study of related research on their chosen topic.

4. Finding time to collaboratively explore answers of practice aligned to the research.

5. Gathering information and data from multiple sources, including district professional learning sessions, networking groups, book study, listening to experts on webcasts and at conferences, trailing new practice,

observing each other’s practice, and making decisions about what does and doesn’t answer the initial inquiry question.

6. Taking a deliberate pause to consider any midcourse corrections needed.

7. Writing up findings to inform (a) professional learning session needed for school staff, (b) next steps in school improvement planning, and (c) annual reports of improvement.

8. Celebrating the final report, which is the best part – often in a learning symposium format that mobilizes the new learning.

As system leaders, leadership and capacity building are related to instruction: the more focus, alignment and coherence at each level—from classroom to school to school community to district to school leadership association to government—the more progress will be made. In preparing principals for a changing world, it is not surprising that countries (and school leadership associations) are looking for levers to successful improvement systems. Organizations around the world know that the most bang for the buck (and return on investment) will come from the leadership in schools—where the ‘rubber hits the road’, principals can and do make the difference.

Increasing Expectations & Complexity

Clarity about the characteristics of effective school and system leadership are occurring at the same time as school leadership itself is becoming more and more complex. As the critical role of principals in developing successful schools is well-established, and the means by which this influence is exerted is becoming clearer, tremendous expectations have been placed on school leaders and school leadership associations. In particular, symposium participants cited a range of increasing expectations and

complexity including cutbacks resulting in blended leadership and teaching roles; and unstable financial commitments for supporting organizational capacity to organize and offer high-quality, ongoing professional development for sustained learning opportunities. At the same time as we see the role of the school leader grow far beyond that of administrator, some countries are granting greater autonomy to schools while raising the bar of accountability measures.

These changes have profound implications for school leaders as well as for the leadership of associations. Fortunately, symposium participants also cited pockets of success—shining lights within systems where instructional leadership is yielding results. As with most system-wide reforms, the core challenge for principal associations is scaling up; replicating success practices and distributed leadership that shares ideas, resources, and high-yield strategies throughout learning networks. So far, collaborative systems of inquiry in practice are far from universal. This underlines the need for international dialogue to build networks of learning in practice and reflection-in-action. And yet, even if improvements occurred universally, 21st century skills have become a challenge about equal to having an elephant in the classroom. It's so big you just can't ignore the implications for preparing principals and developing school leadership associations for the 21st century.



International Panel at the International Symposium, 2013

Photo: Ian McFarlane, Executive Director of the *Ontario Principals' Council* facilitates discussion with international panel members Bernadette Hunter, President, *National Association of Head Teachers* and Brendan McCabe, President, *Irish Primary Principals' Network*.

Preparing School Leaders: 21st Century Skills

What are the skills that students need to be successful in this rapidly changing world and what competencies do school leaders need, in turn, to effectively focus on those outcomes as leaders of learning? Whether we refer to this path as student-centric, personalized learning, or differentiated instruction..., what we do know is that these new paths will continue to evolve, and that technology and innovation will take root in new models that will require us to grow and change how we teach and lead. Getting beyond the debate around which prescriptive list of 21st century skills to focus on, Dr. Avis Glaze referenced work from Tony Wagner as our symposium considered sample 21st century skills, and then the schooling students need in the form of seven survival skills.

21st Century Skills

- Emotional intelligence
- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Problem solving skills
- Creativity and innovation
- Personal and communication skills
- Technological skills
- Organization skills
- Personal management skills
- Team work and collaboration
- Partnership development
- Community outreach, development and engagement
- Anti-racism, equity and inclusiveness
- Global awareness and understanding

The Schooling Students Need: Seven Survival Skills

1. Critical thinking and problem solving
2. Collaboration and leadership
3. Agility and adaptability
4. Initiative and entrepreneurialism
5. Effective oral and written communication
6. Accessing and analyzing information
7. Curiosity and imagination

If ‘so goes the principal, so goes the school’, what are the implications for preparing principals and developing school leadership associations for the 21st century? As Fullan states in *The Moral Imperative Realized*, “the new role definition of the principal includes the requirement that he or she has the explicit responsibility to learn from other schools as well as to contribute to their betterment” (58). The implications for school leadership associations ‘walking this talk’ as *system leaders* may mean that the

organization's role is once again shifting; therefore, if we consider an adapted moral imperative role for associations, it may take three forms:

- One concerns school leadership associations becoming more committed to linking to other associations while still staying focused on their own localized needs.
- A second involves lead learners or executive of organizations taking positions to oversee or help each other to seek connections that help each other go further.
- The third may involve principal associations as system leaders collaborating in an ongoing commitment to ongoing learning about whole-system reform that realizes the moral imperative realized of excellence and equity for all.

Adapted from *The Moral Imperative Realized* (Chapter 4 – System Leaders)
- Michael Fullan

Three Critical Leadership Skills

To zero in on putting faces on the data, research clearly identifies three critical leadership skills (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). As lead learners who participate as learners and work as 'guides on the side' in working with teachers to make instructional improvements, all lead learners become skilled in the cyclical reflective process of modeling collective capacity for collaboration, and empowering each other through shared leadership. However, the actual concrete reality of going from theory to weaving into the daily job-embedded practice of schools and associations remains elusive.

As shown in Figure 1, educators want instructional leadership processes that can be clustered into three critical leadership areas: namely, know-ability, mobilize-ability, and sustain-ability.

Figure 1



What do these three critical areas look like in practice?

As we know, an instructional leader is knowledgeable about both high-yield assessment practices and high-yield instructional practices. In Dr. Lyn Sharratt's research, clustered responses point to defined skill items associated with each of these three processes associated with instructional leadership. All of

these findings corroborate what we know about effective leaders (whether we refer to school leadership or to a school association’s leadership) for establishing shared understandings prior to the symposium participants sharing ideas around the potential role and impact of a principals’ organization.

Figure 2

Three Leadership Skills Identified – Items in Clustered Responses		
Cluster	Responses – Skill Items Defined	Rank
Know-ability	Knowledge and understanding of best practices, professional	1
	Having a strong, compelling message	4
	Effective management of resources, structure, lead organization to gather data, meetings, accountability	6
	Effective management of human resources; looks after well-being of the team	9
	Capacity building for collaboration, empowering through shared leadership, recognizes contributions	10
	Leader as “lead learner,” why this, why now, modeling continuous learning	11
Mobilize-ability	Instills collaborative culture focused on shared values	2
	Effective communication skills, delivering clear consistent messages	3
	Ability to motivate and inspire others	11
	Being involved and visible – in meetings, with the data, in professional learning	11
Sustain-ability	Building and sustaining strong relationships to foster trust	5
	Creating positive environment of trust and encouragement, nonthreatening	7
	Committed to advocate for learners, to shared goal that each child’s progress is a shared responsibility	8

A School Leadership Association’s Role

Sustaining the improvement work is about developing other leaders. Our intention was to dialogue as lead learners of organizations about the conditions that we needed to create for sustaining large numbers of instructional leaders (and instructional processes) while maximizing the impact of maintaining focus on sustainability that becomes more deliberate and precise. Synergy was created as sustainability was worked on in a self-conscious and organizationally conscious manner. There was an emerging consensus on the school leadership association’s role in building a well-functioning student-centered instructional leadership system.

K-M-S Defined

Know-ability

For know-ability, participants indicated the need for a school leadership association to be regarded as the ‘knowledgeable trusted other’; the key was an organization’s deep structured understanding of student-centered leadership and practices in schools. As ‘knowledgeable others’, school leadership associations are expected to know what this looks like for modelling the dual role of both operations manager and instructional leadership. This also means school leadership organizations play a crucial role in supporting the continuous improvement and development of school leaders as learners. In practice, this means supporting the continuous improvement and development of school leaders as learners to:

- lead and facilitate continuous professional learning opportunities to ensure alignment between membership professional learning needs and student-centered leadership in practice (e.g., courses, conferences, regional or district meetings, briefs, etc.)
- enable mentoring and coaching for developing systems and community capacity building
- disseminate (and possibly sponsor) evidence-based research, policy knowledge, and shared knowledge or understandings related to school leadership and professional learning
- conduct field-based research (collaborative inquiry and action research) to confirm or influence knowledge of instructional leadership in practice.

Mobilize-ability

Facilitate sharing to:

- share best practice, modelling of excellence, distributed leadership co-leading (including networking, focus groups)
- build leaders’ capacity to accurately self-assess their leading abilities
- maintain ongoing active engagement of school leaders in seeking their input, providing critical feedback, reflecting the impact of decisions and transparency about what the data tells us about members’ needs for impacting student learning

Figure 3: Summary of
Symposium K-M-S Place-mat
Activity” (16)

Sustainability

Sustain leaders of learning in practice to:

- differentiate connections between members and professional learning communities to meet the needs of aspiring and experienced leaders
- support shared beliefs, goals, and organizational vision that provides the foundation for distributed leadership, data-based decisions that reflect trends, and a learning culture that celebrates success
- develop other leaders who are knowledgeable (skilled), mobilize-able (committed to capacity building and shared leadership), and sustain-able (driven to creating the conditions under which all school leaders can flourish).

K-M-S Keys for School Leadership Association

Knowability as...The Knowledgeable Trusted Other

Mobilize-ability as...The Skillful Data Collaborator that informs leadership needs and consensus for action

Sustainability as...Leaders of learning who are knowledgeable (skilled), mobilize-able (capacity building and shared leadership), and sustainable (driven to creating the conditions under which all school leaders can flourish).

“Know-ability”

Support the continuous improvement and development of school leaders as learners:

- lead and facilitate continuous professional learning opportunities to ensure alignment between membership professional learning needs and student-centered leadership in practice (courses, conference, regional or district meetings, briefs, etc.)
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A School Leadership Association’s Role

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A Paradigm Shift

Sixteen Trends Impacting Education in the 21st Century

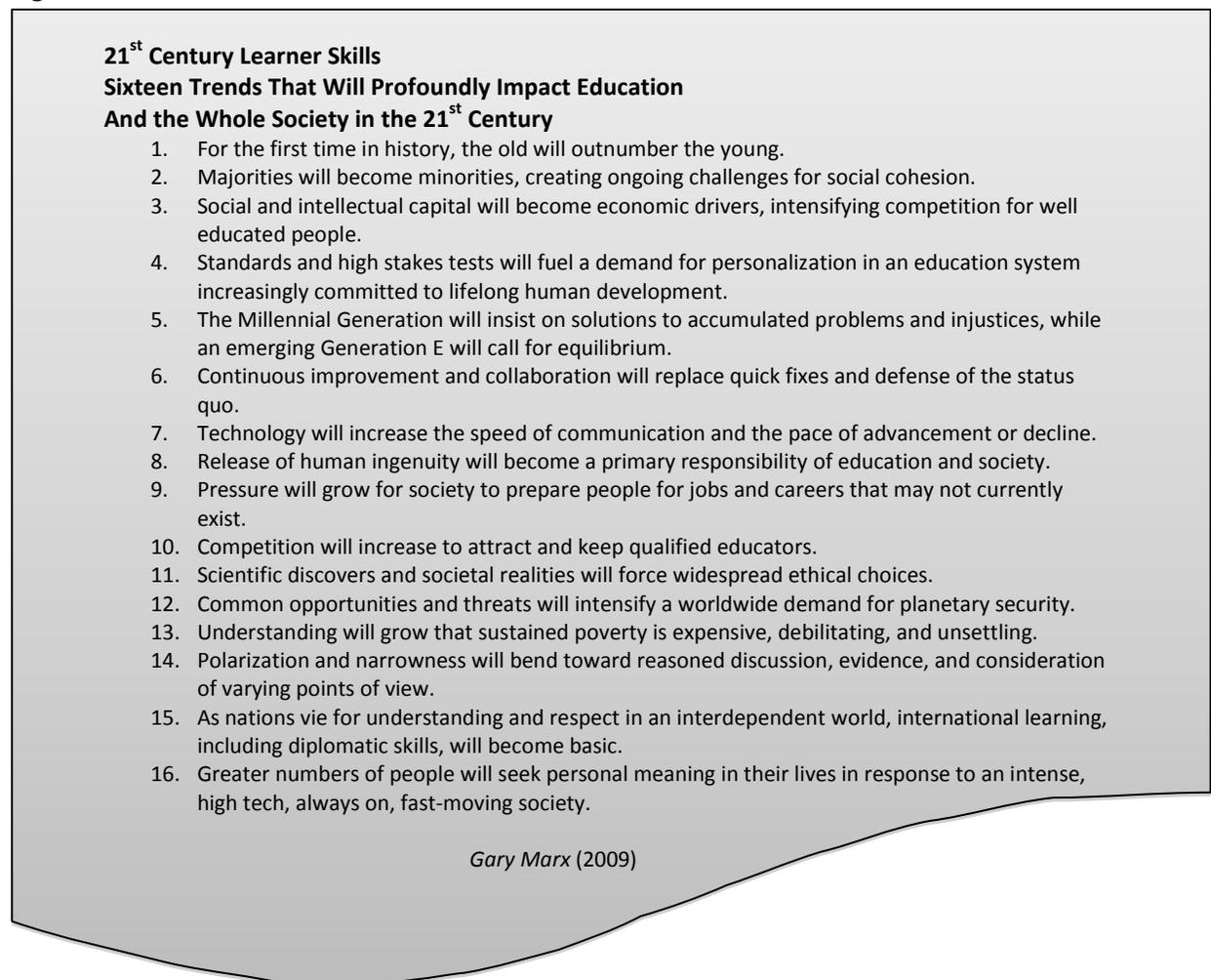
If know-ability, mobilize-ability, and sustain-ability remain central to supporting system growth for student-centric learning, how will disruptive innovation trends change the way the world learns? The road to realizing our highest hopes for school leadership is not an easy one. But with research and field-based experience providing us with feedback and understanding of how children learn, there is a great opportunity to make strides in the years ahead as long as we continually assess how we are doing and adapt based on feedback.

To Be, or Not to Be (Change Agents):

There is No Question

We will not become involved in the debates over what constitutes 21st century learner skills, or which trends will profoundly impact education and the whole society in the 21st century. Our only interest here is in what the symposium data say about system realities (and the context of participants) in their assessment of where they are at in relation to sixteen trends that will profoundly impact education and the whole society in the 21st century. Figure 4 provides an overview of sixteen trends considered as an organizational self-assessment activity.

Figure 4



System Realities and 21st Century Learner Skills

What is our system reality (school leadership association context) in relation to these sixteen trends?
The aim of this group sharing activity was to ask ourselves reflective questions about context, 21st century learner skills, and consider both gap analysis and targeted areas for improvement and planning for the future.

Figure 5

System Realities and 21st-Century Learner Skills

<i>Context</i>	<i>Gap Analysis</i>	<i>21st Century Learner Skills</i> <i>Sixteen Trends That Will Profoundly Impact Education & the Whole Society in the 21st Century</i>
<p><i>As Professional Associations...</i></p> <p><i>As Connectors...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set direction by establishing clear shared goals based on members' needs and input (changing roles, needs, demographics) • Connect the political improvement agenda over time while building and maintaining political relationships. 	<p><i>The Disconnect...</i></p> <p><i>Relational Process</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Connect values and passions for specific changes (gap between the vision and the current reality) with the values and passions of those who will implement them. <p><i>Shared Understandings & Constructive Problem Talk</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lead and facilitate shared understandings, and a collaborative approach to improvement. (Build trust through collaborative problem talk.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the first time in history, the old will outnumber the young. 2. Majorities will become minorities, creating ongoing challenges for social cohesion. 3. Social and intellectual capital will become economic drivers, intensifying competition for well educated people. 4. Standards and high stakes tests will fuel a demand for personalization in an education system increasingly committed to lifelong human development. 5. The Millennial Generation will insist on solutions to accumulated problems and injustices, while an emerging Generation E will call for equilibrium.
<p><i>As Organizational Leaders of Lead Learners...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and support a shared and sustained focus on improvement. 	<p><i>Linking Talk</i></p> <p><i>Evidence-Based and Collaborative Inquiry</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a culture of evidence-based and collaborative inquiry into actual or possible impact on particular (diversified needs of all) students. • Link discussion of students (diversity, equity, engagement) with student- 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Continuous improvement and collaboration will replace quick fixes and defense of the status quo. 7. Technology will increase the speed of communication and the pace of advancement or decline. 8. Release of human ingenuity will become a primary responsibility of education and

	<p>centered leadership for developing coherence, focus.</p> <p><i>Open-to-Learning Leadership Forums</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check assumptions, norms that constrain PLCs (open to divergent points of view, learning from mistakes); present leaders with new possibilities. 	<p>society.</p> <p>9. Pressure will grow for society to prepare people for jobs and careers that may not currently exist.</p> <p>10. Competition will increase to attract and keep qualified educators.</p> <p>11. Scientific discoveries and societal realities will force widespread ethical choices.</p> <p>12. Common opportunities and threats will intensify a worldwide demand for planetary security.</p>
<p><i>As System Networkers of Lead Learners...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster interactions for connecting peers with purpose and generating system coherence that is more evident-based and accessible. 	<p><i>Balancing Improvement and Innovation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase ‘system thinking in action’ with a focus on solutions to adaptive challenges while maintaining regular focus on solutions. <p><i>Cross-Nations Lateral Capacity Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the idea and commit morally (to systems beyond one’s own) that it is our organizational responsibility to learn from other leadership associations and to contribute to the learning of other professional organizations. <p><i>Whole System Agenda Partnerships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in partnerships with a whole system agenda (with chapter regions, provinces, countries) that will impact capacity building (new knowledge and learning from each other with respect to improving student-centered leadership, leadership skills and competencies, shared resources). 	<p>13. Understanding will grow that sustained poverty is expensive, debilitating, and unsettling.</p> <p>14. Polarization and narrowness will bend toward reasoned discussion, evidence, and consideration of varying points of view.</p> <p>15. As nations vie for understanding and respect in an interdependent world, international learning, including diplomatic skills, will become basic.</p> <p>16. Greater numbers of people will seek personal meaning in their lives in response to an intense, high tech, always on, fast-moving society.</p>

<p><i>As System Alignment Advocates...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align system reform in action for development solutions at the school, community, district, national level (and differentiate between national and regional as appl.) 	<p><i>Advocate and facilitate Alignment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead continuous self-evaluation for aligning beliefs and developing knowledge and skills among school leadership and whole system reform (incl. e.g., closing the gap between policy and evidence-based data and research). Foster connections for learning from each other—both inside (cross-association membership & lateral capacity development) and outside (capacity building with a focus on results and systems learning and networking). 	
<p><i>Planning For The Future:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop ‘Professional Capital’ by sharing and learning globally from each other’s practice. Collaborate on action research (the development, accumulation, and circulation of professional capital) that connects to student-centered leadership (and connects back to the impact on learning for all students). 		

Alignment of Shared Responsibility and Accountability

Five Key Questions for Students

In John Hattie's groundbreaking research and book entitled *Visible Learning For Teachers*, he provides a set of benchmarks that can be used to create debates, to seek evidence, and to self-review to determine whether a system is having a marked impact on all of its students (2012). In this spirit of making learning visible and assessing the impact of learning, Lyn Sharratt and Michael Fullan explore the idea of 'testing' how we are doing by posing five key questions to students. In their book *Putting Faces on the Data*, Sharratt and Fullan underline the importance of asking students these key questions for enabling shared expectations, understandings, and transparency of learning (74-75).

Figure 6

Five Key Questions for Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are you learning?• How are you doing?• How do you know?• How can you improve?• Where do you go for help?

Five Questions for School Leaders

To date, research has shown the powerful impact achieved by asking students these five key questions and the implications for research data, for leadership and for individualizing for improvement. Symposium table groups brainstormed what five key questions might underline assessment and instruction improvement drivers for school leaders, followed by a dot-mocracy activity to arrive at a shared consensus. A 'test' of how we are doing might be whether school leaders in every school can answer the five questions shown in Figure 6.

*Know thy
impact.*
- John Hattie

Figure 7

Five Key Questions for School Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where are we going (and how do we assess our progress)?• How do we get there?• What do I need to get there?• How do I know who's with us?• How do we sustain...?

Five Key Questions for School Leadership Associations

Just as school leaders need to know what success looks like and why, so do principal organizations. A main reason why school leaders stay involved in a school leadership association may relate to the positive impact on school leaders in their jurisdiction. But how can a school leadership association assess impact? There are features of school leader learning or professional development that we know have an impact on system learning. And yet how do school leadership associations know how and when to seek and receive feedback from others?

Our table groups moved toward a collective understanding of five key questions for school leadership organizations to assess the evidence and impact of our actions.

Figure 8

Five Key Questions for School Leadership Associations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do we exist (and what is our core purpose)?• How do we sustain our core purpose (track, monitor, adjust)?• Are we a trusted and credible voice for children (as advocates of student-centered leadership)?• What are the most effective methods of delivery of our message? (How do we stay current and relevant?)• How do we engage members and sustain our organization?

Five Key Questions for School Leadership Associations

The intention of this alignment exercise was to sift through the complexity toward simplicity. Leaders of learning organizations who know the ‘skinny’ may be able to achieve amazing results in a culture of shared ownership. As we apply these five key questions as a resource to assist in the interpretation of formative information to allow organizations, school leaders, and students to see ‘learning in progress’ and focus with more precision on ‘Where to next?’ the reward is knowing in a dependable and transparent manner, the quality of impact on student learning outcomes. It is worth underscoring the use of these five key questions as an iterative cycle of inquiry. Strategies that were successful initially may no longer take school leadership and learning to a deeper level.

A School Leadership Association’s Self-Assessment Tool

The specific and unique needs of each school leadership association became the next step in the activity’s focus. After the five key questions for school leadership associations were co-constructed in ways that unpacked each other’s meaning, we revisited these questions as a self-assessment tool to consider what was working, not working, and next steps.

Figure 9 is a sample excerpt of how this action tool was used to provide critical data. Each association had different areas of focus; what mattered was the formative assessment of where each organization was at and the assessment for learning data that could be used in making decisions that affect leadership and learning.

Figure 9

5 Key Questions for School Leadership Associations	What's working?	What's not working?	What's next?
Why do we exist?	▶ <i>Membership advocacy and support</i>	▶ <i>Pockets of member engagement (not distributed)</i>	▶ <i>Determine strategies to keep membership engaged, involved, inquisitive.</i>
Are we on track with our core purpose?	▶ <i>Yes, we use our critical drivers to frame actions, evaluations, reports.</i>	▶ <i>Participation is not always as high as anticipated.²⁵</i>	▶ <i>Survey and gather data about principals' expectations and needs.</i> ▶ <i>Train the 'middle tier' of heads to provide advice and support.</i>
Are we a trusted and credible voice for children?	▶ <i>Yes, we have increased credibility, e.g., with the Ministry and with our members.</i>	▶ <i>We would like to influence education policy at the government level.</i>	▶ <i>Look for opportunities to support research and publications that can be relevant to the community.</i>
What are the most effective methods of delivery and how do we stay current?	▶ <i>Regular communications with stakeholders</i>	▶ <i>Knowledge around purposeful use of technology for connecting to members and chapters</i>	▶ <i>Facilitate a Think Tank for input on effective communications and delivery to all members.</i>
How do we engage members and sustain our organization?	▶ <i>National Executive Council (with opportunities for face to face meetings)</i>	▶ <i>Limited use of digital communications (e.g., online forums, social media)</i>	▶ <i>Improve use of social media and digital networks to engage links with younger, aspiring leaders.</i> ▶ <i>Increase engagement with purposeful use of technology (e.g., twitter, facebook).</i>

The Approach

Finding the Organizational Path to 21st Century Learning

Transformative Learning

The paradigm shift of a system reality focused on the 21st century learner is about personalized learning that differentiates outcomes based on the unique needs of all learners. For system student-centered leadership, this translates into shared beliefs and understandings as foundational to evidence-based inquiry that works. In this challenging, complex, inter-connected world that we live in, this means developing increased transparency of shared understandings for:

- practising a shared ‘we-we’ commitment to ongoing learning and never ending improvement that always relates back to student achievement outcomes
- developing frameworks that enable high expectations around commonalities (skills, competencies) AND ongoing self-assessment for personalized learning
- fostering shared professional capital by creating networks of reflective practice

Achieving this kind of *transparency* and *shared understandings* around student-centered leadership may look remarkably similar for various lead learners in systems of collaborative enquiry in practice.

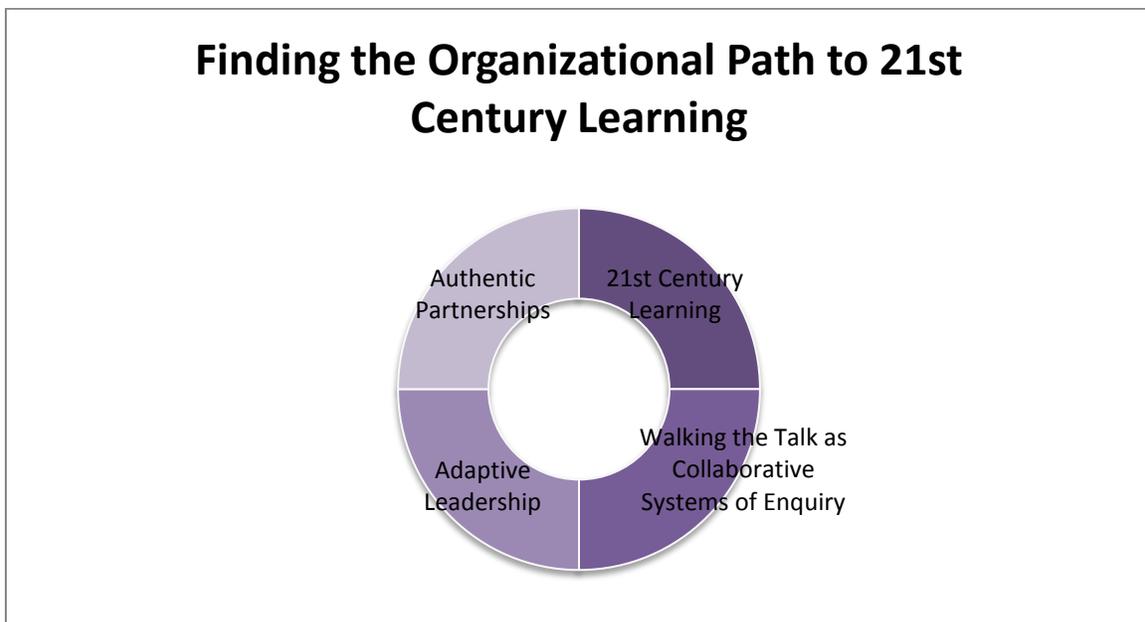
	<i>Examples of What This Might Look Like for Leaders of Learning</i>	<i>Examples of What This Might Look Like For School Leadership Associations...</i>
<i>Practising a shared ‘we-we’ commitment to ongoing learning and never ending improvement</i>	✓ From ‘my school’ to ‘our school’ for capacity building, learning in context, lateral capacity building, sustainability	✓ Systems leaders in action— within the association, with other associations for capacity building, learning in context, lateral capacity building, sustainability
<i>Developing frameworks that enable high expectations around commonalities (skills, competencies) AND ongoing self-assessment for personalized learning</i>	✓ A School Effectiveness Framework that aligns with a School Leadership Framework	✓ A School Leadership Framework (SLF)
<i>Fostering shared professional capital by creating networks of reflective practice</i>	✓ Create the conditions that empower the decisions and actions of the school’s leadership to improve teaching that reflects student learning	✓ An evidence-based inquiry and cycle of feedback that targets shared professional learning needs based on an SLF

For coherence and alignment to occur that move jurisdictions away from ‘pockets of excellence’, this vision requires change knowledge expertise that taps into four interconnected areas. The first is integrating the 21st century skills aforementioned in System Realities and the 21st-Century Learner. The second is adaptive leadership that provides a sense of direction, coherence and coordination as befits the challenge of change and requires a shift to a style of leadership that is shared.

The third, which is a crucial enabler of know-ability, mobilize-ability, and sustain-ability, is authentic partnerships that find their purpose and energy in collective action. Such partnerships between schools, between districts, between provinces (states), between countries grow from a commitment to a shared mission and vision, develop over time. Authentic partnerships create a sense of community and strengthen a system’s ability to provide high quality educational programs and supports for lead learners that grow ‘pockets of excellence’. The fourth is walking the walk as collaborative systems of evidence-based inquiry that integrates and adapts new data and change knowledge of high performing collaborative systems of inquiry related to key questions outlined earlier to assess—what is working, what is not working, what we do we need to do differently—to maximize outcomes for all lead learners throughout the system working on the bottom line of improving student achievement.

This cycle of transformative learning must be relentlessly pursued in an integrated way to integrate all four interconnected areas. A static list of 21st century skills, for example, should not be considered ‘the answer’ or ‘the target’ given the individualized needs of students, shifting dynamics of students in a school and the corresponding strengths and learning needs of staff for enabling a responsive curriculum and instruction. Similarly, even the greatest school and system leadership cannot know everything and will benefit from intra- and inter-system networking that will effectively drive reflection-in-action and capacity building.

Figure 10



Adaptive Leadership

A number of symposium participants addressed the challenge of connections and engagement: connecting and engaging with all members, and with all stakeholders (including the government). Whether discussion was about the changing demographics of members, how to distribute the leadership of pockets of excellence, how to stay informed as the pace of change continues to increase, or how to get better at spotting these trends, we recognized the need to maximize the impact of what I'm going to refer to as "tribal knowledge."

In looking to the future, the only constant is change.
- Mitch Joel

All of our school leadership associations have these pockets of excellence or professional capital but we need to learn more as leaders of learning and how to share and nurture tribal knowledge within our organizations. As we work on our own organizational adaptive expertise, it may be considered the core purpose of professional learning to develop the professionalism of school leaders as adaptive experts who also work in schools with high adaptive capacity. *Although the research base is relatively recent, and still developing, ongoing gains in outcomes for students are more evident in professional learning initiatives that develop adaptive expertise than those that do not.* (Timperley, 162-163).

So how do we extend our reach or grow and nurture our communities? What can we do to ensure participation in conversations and communities to keep pace, grow our communities, share expertise, and help expand to ensure our organizations evolve? Unfortunately there can be no set formula to follow and no set of rules to guarantee the ongoing growth of communities in practice. What we do know is the necessity of job embedded improvement with decisions about learning foci integrated in iterative inquiry cycles about ongoing improvement in student outcomes so that we receive ongoing feedback about changes that need to be made in teaching and leadership practices.

As we go forward with building communities of practice, it is our collective intention to assess and consult with members about:

- How do we create and foster an engaged community that is interested in what we're doing and what their peers are doing?
- How do we enable and empower our community to connect?
- How do we make all of our initiatives evolve, connect, and grow?

Bulleted items are adapted from *Six Pixels of Separation* by Mitch Joel, (164-165.)

As Helen Timperley reminds us in her book *Realizing the Power of Professional Learning*, this notion of "developing systems for refocusing inquiry and deepening knowledge through iterative cycles, and broadening foci to encompass new areas in ways that form a coherent learning system are central to sustaining ongoing improvement across students, teaching and leading" (164). As we continue to grow and develop student-centered leadership systems for engaging and connecting with all members, stakeholders, we need to consider another dimension of adaptive leadership: when and how to engage and connect with knowledgeable others in what we will refer to here as *authentic partnerships*.



Photo: Lisa Vincent, President, International Confederation of Principals brainstorms ideas with Sean Cottrell, National Director, Irish Primary Principals' Network

Photo (Left to Right): Debbie Davidson, Director of Partnerships, International School Leadership and Joanne Robinson, Director of Professional Learning, Ontario Principals' Council, listen and learn from symposium participants.



Authentic Partnerships

In her book *Realizing the Power of Professional Learning*, Helen Timperley explains that “sustainability requires developing interdependence with those with specific expertise” (164). The reality is that no single person has all the knowledge, skills, and talent to lead, improve, or meet all the needs of student-centered leadership; it takes a collaborative effort and widely dispersed leadership to meet the challenges confronting the shifting needs of system realities and the 21st century learner.

“The centerpiece of all successful whole system reform cases is capacity building—the development of individual and group efficacy when it comes to new skills, resources, and motivation.” *Transforming schools an entire system at a time*
- Michael Fullan

Many symposium participants felt it would be beneficial to stay connected with each other and explore opportunities for collaboration. This begs the next obvious question that we have not yet clearly defined as system thinkers in action: what might these organizational relationships look like as *authentic partnerships*? If we integrate the insights of Fullan (2005) and Perkins (2003), we can begin to think through what authentic partnerships would look like as finding their purpose in collective action.

In his book *Leadership & Sustainability*, Fullan talks about “progressive interactions that maximize quality knowledge and social cohesion” (99). As he cites Perkins’ work, there are two aspects of progressive interactions: “process smart (good exchange of ideas, good decisions and solutions, farseeing plans) and “people smart” (interactions that foster cohesiveness and energize people to work together) (99).” As we continue to hone skills as system thinkers in action and develop system or organizational intelligence, we will need to look for ways to partner and grow from a commitment to a shared mission and vision.

New questions will arise as we open this door to creating a sense of community and strengthen each association’s ability to provide high quality programming and supports. We want to be stay connected. We already operate in many networks. Next steps might involve taking a closer look at how we already operate in these many networks, drawing our networks from various perspectives, then note where value is exchanged and captured (when we talk with members, we gain knowledge; when we meet with counterparts, we make connections) before examining how these networks can grow, how we can make more connections in each, how each connection can be more valuable for everyone.

Adapted from
*What Would
Google Do?*
- Jeff Jarvis



Photo: Larry O'Malley, Member at Large, Ontario Principals' Council, John Ryan, Coordinator of the Leadership Committee for English Education in Quebec and James McKinnon, Member, Leadership Committee for English Education in Quebec provide input as Frank Palumbo, Member at Large takes notes for the group.



Photo: A table group celebrates progress with high fives.



Photo: The Consulting Line activity

The Five C's of School Leadership Organizations 2.0?

Many symposium participants voiced the need to learn more about the purposeful use of technology for supporting both the work of their organizations (communications) and for connecting peers with purpose (vision, maintain focus). Despite the challenges of broadband access in some areas, the emergence of new technologies, designed around the principles of communications and collaboration, are likely to prove central to engaging all lead learners and developing 21st century skills.

There may be multiple commonalities around professional learning needs: firstly, considering the total cost (time, resources) for helping school leaders developing the skills and capabilities needed to deploy these tools as leaders of learning and learning how to assess the impact on student outcomes. Secondly, connecting peers with purpose will involve professional learning about design and alignment between learners and the every day practices of schools and system leaders so that we can know more about where and when the use of technology makes sense.

So... what might be the five C's of school leadership organizations 2.0? In this short white paper, I do not attempt to answer this question in detail (or pretend to have the answers). Rather, my goal is to give some directional advice and provide a springboard for discussion.

1. Credibility?

In *Professional Capital*, Hargreaves and Fullan talk about ‘being the change’; the importance of being “capable and credible; morally consistent, culturally connected, and strategically aligned” (182). As we walk the talk of being collaborative systems of inquiry, building community may be more about ‘pull’ than ‘push’. By continuously asking ourselves how we add value to the community (and enable others to add value) and build trust, we may grow credibility because people will come to us instead of us pushing ourselves (and our views) on them.

Each needs new capacities for the obvious reason that it will be impossible to have good partnerships without each party being capable, but also because you can't be credible if you can't model what you are requesting of others.

- Hargreaves & Fullan (182)

2. Community?

There's a reason why we connect with certain people, and serve the communities in which we work. Imagine being able to magnify the connections of engaging with members and stakeholders. Imagine being able to contribute to the growth of your system needs by connecting with other system thinkers in action, with other networks of learning?

3. Connecting?

Brass tacks: We are all connected, and being connected may be a big part of how we are going to grow as organizations. Assuming that connecting increasingly becomes a core system value, it may be worthwhile to consider:

- a) How are we connecting to members?
- b) How do we nurture those connections to make more connections?
- c) How do we engage others and grow?

Adapted from
Six Pixels of Separation
- Mitch Joel

4. Conversations?

In *Six Pixels of Separation*, Mitch Joel says “A conversation has to lead to a connection, and that connection is community” (56). Symposium participants were highly aware of the need to learn more about finding new ways to engage with members to be responsive to all members’ needs. With limited resources, there will be a need for organizations to shift toward new ways of interacting without getting too bogged down or taking the focus away from our main course of action. As we look more closely at these opportunities, we will need to assess high yield strategies for new media and distributed leadership for managing it all.

5. Creating?

One of the biggest shifts is the individual’s ability to create content (Joel, 55). As we think about challenges and professional learning priorities for building connections and engagement, it may be valuable for us to consider:

- a) What expertise and knowledge do we have?
- b) How can we best share this with our members? (Text, images, audio, video?)

- c) Is there something we can create that will empower *our members* to connect to one another better?
- d) Is there something we can create that will empower *our associations* to connect to one another better?

The Vision

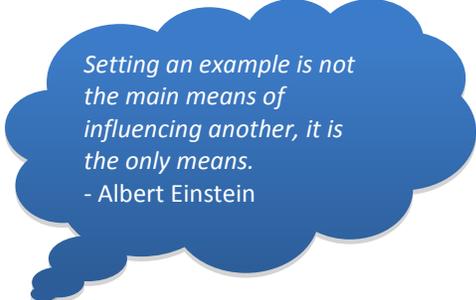
A Global Professional Learning Network with Local Journeys?

This white paper has initiated an international forum for school leadership associations to dialogue about preparing principals and developing school leadership associations for the 21st century. We believe that *instructional leadership* and *system thinking* apply as much to a village in Ireland or the U.K. as they do to urban areas such as Copenhagen, Melbourne, and Vancouver. This leadership journey will clearly require a local lens, guided by all the global understandings of instruction and drawing on our collective capacities for improving all systems everywhere. As symposium participants had the opportunity to learn from other systems around the world, I was reminded of Fullan’s words (again): “In a phrase, you cannot make the system go unless you make collective engagement *the priority*” (*All Systems Go*, 102).

Networks of Learning in Practice?

We have high hopes for our school leaders and principal associations. While each of us might articulate these hopes differently, four seem common to many of us. These aspirations are summarized as follows:

1. Develop the skills, capabilities, and attitudes that will enable us as system thinkers in action to walk the talk of instructional leadership in practice.
2. Create systematic learning opportunities for leaders of learning that help them develop the complex skills needed to lead and transform contemporary schools.
3. As collaborative communities of inquiry and network learners, recognize the need to differentiate learning for connecting and engaging with all lead learners of learning and learners (e.g., for both aspiring and experienced school leaders; for younger lead learners more comfortable with using technology to connect and communicate).
4. Consider opportunities for global networking and dialogue for achieving system-wide progress.



These aspirations must be realized in actions that obtain results. If our actions do not relate back to impacting student outcomes, then there is no moral imperative for investment in continuous development, and capacity building. In other words, with these aspirations, we seek to become *system* talented—that is, we want to work in and keep developing cultures of purposeful collaboration.

Next Steps

A Global Dialogue about Levers of Action

This international symposium of school leadership associations from around the world has stimulated the appetite of countries to learn from each other, especially about the practices, principles, and

Professional capital is about constantly learning from your own efforts, and from the efforts and achievements of others, wherever they are in the world.

-Andy Hargreaves & Michael Fullan

instructional strategies that lie behind success for school leaders and all learners. The not so surprising revelation is that countries and system thinkers benefit from both sharing what they know and seeking insights from their global peers (and connecting with purpose). Like our high-performing 'pockets of excellence', we want to continue to reach out, no matter where we are in a system continuum of learning, for new insights, and ways to keep doing better.

The publication of this paper is only a first step toward finding the organizational path to 21st century learning and leadership. The ideas presented here draw on the experience and insights of the participants at this first two day international symposium, but our thinking has been developed over time by our learning facilitators Dr. Avis Glaze and Dr. Lyn Sharratt as well as drawn from all the research and practical, powerful ideas of experts from around the world. Our next steps, therefore, would be to propose a dialogue in which common challenges and new ideas can be debated and discussed.

Over the new few months, we plan to disseminate this white paper and facilitate dialogue about recommendations from school leadership associations. Our aim is to collectively refine topics of mutual interest for preparing principals and developing school leadership associations for the 21st century. Thank you for all that you do in supporting the principalship to make a difference for students. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and lessons learned on the road to school leadership and ongoing improvement.

—**Debbie Davidson**

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APPENDIX

POTENTIAL ASSOCIATION ROLES (5 CORNERS ACTIVITY SUMMARY)

LEGAL SUPPORT



Rob Whetter and Sarah Colman

Legal Support (Allyson Otten & Sarah Colman, Corner Reps)

OPC Legal Services support for members includes:

- 3 lawyers and 4 'Counsellors' (retired principals as consultants) – service and stewardship
- Two main areas: behaviour and performance with four response areas: quick response to problems; prevention (legislation workshop, principals' course); formal legal counselling specific to principals; help with short and long term disability and advance consultation about legislation
- Risk management (prevention workshops about legal issues)
- Consulting with legislation; teaching – due diligence



RESEARCH

Lyn Sharratt

Research (Lyn Sharratt, Corner Rep.)

- Books co-published by the Ontario Principals' Council (Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves, Lyn Sharratt, Avis Glaze...)
- University affiliations with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the Charles Sturt University (with a Principals' Qualification Program aligned with Masters)
- Literacy & Numeracy Secretariat
- Webinars; on-line access; qualifications courses
- OPC's The Register magazine including publications, opinions, trends
- International School Leadership Programming



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Linda Massey

Student Achievement (Linda Massey, Corner Rep.)

- 9th year of Leading Student Achievement that now includes 2,000 schools, 62 districts, voluntary (invite only)
- Ministry funding
- Successful if principal is committed
- A collaborative inquiry model for principals to share best practice about instructional leadership to build the capacity of their teachers for maximizing impact on student achievement



ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Bob Pratt

Advocacy and Community Engagement (Bob Pratt, Corner Rep.)

- Political; non-partisan
- Unions when applicable
- Workload issues
- Evidence-based advocacy – role of principals



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Joanne Robinson

Professional Learning (Joanne Robinson, Corner Rep.)

- Conferences in the past although they are no longer well attended.
- Online activities; workshops, webinars
- Talking Heads Forum (Australia)
- British Columbia Principals (e-mail, list serve for support, University of British Columbia course)
- Books (Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves, Lyn Sharratt, Avis Glaze, etc.) co-published with Publishers
- More use of technology is needed to support professional learning opportunities.